

EDWARD JOHN ROUTH

ONE of the most famous names in the history and the progress of mathematics in England has been transferred to the roll of record by the death of Dr. Edward John Routh on June 7th, 1907.

During the greater part of last century, nearly every able mathematical student at the University of Cambridge was prepared for his final examination by a private tutor: and among these private tutors ("coaches," to adopt the word of technical and friendly use), two names stand out, eminent beyond all others. They are Hopkins and Routh. William Hopkins was a conspicuous figure in Cambridge, teaching during the second quarter of the century: among his pupils in that period were Stokes, Cayley, Adams, Thomson, Maxwell, and Routh himself. Routh's immediate influence extended from the later fifties until 1888: and during those years, a large majority of successful students were happy in calling themselves his pupils. The University has recently decided to abolish the order of individual merit in the Mathematical Tripos, and thus, incidentally, to annihilate the significance of the title of Senior Wrangler, and of another title, as picturesque though not quite so honour-bearing. It is Routh's unique distinction to have coached twenty-four Senior Wranglers in twenty-four consecutive years: no man will ever be able to repeat the achievement.

This distinguished teacher and investigator was born in Quebec on 20th January, 1831. His father was Sir Randolph Routh, K.C.B., an old Etonian, Commissary-General in the Army, and Senior Commissariat officer at Waterloo in 1815. His boyhood was spent in London: he was educated at University College School: and later, at University College, he came under the influence of Augustus de Morgan. It may have been due to friendship with that mathematician, who was our founder, that Routh became a member of our Society at its inception in January, 1865.

He was admitted a pensioner at Peterhouse on June 1st, 1850, and commenced residence in October. Clerk Maxwell entered at the same college in that year, but he migrated to Trinity near the close of his freshman's term. Other names belonging to the same "year" are those of the present Chancellor of the University, the Duke of Devonshire; Mr. Aldis Wright,